

September 1954

Volume 33

Number 389

# ***LABOUR ORGANISER***

## ★ **CONTENTS** ★

**Leeds Cleared its Debts**

**Simple Method of Recording**

**Run a Week-end School**

**Election Courses a Success**

**Preparing for County Fights**

**PRICE FIVEPENCE**

# Situations Vacant

**HUDDERSFIELD BOROUGH LABOUR PARTY**—Applications are invited for the post of Secretary-Agent for the above Party. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms obtainable from Ald. A. Gardiner, J.P., 2 Station Street, Huddersfield, to whom the forms must be returned not later than 16th October, 1954. Successful applicant will take up duties on February 1st, 1955.

**EAST FULHAM C.L.P.**—Applications are invited for the post of full-time Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement, but additional amount would be paid to the right person according to qualifications and experience. Application forms obtainable from Mr. L. Maynard, 131 Dawes Road, Fulham, London, S.W.6, to whom they should be returned not later than 21st September, 1954.

## WANTED

Reader wishes copies of the 'Labour Organiser' for January, 1942 and August, 1943, also Conference Reports 1939-1948 (especially 1947 and 1948). Good price paid. Write BCM/COF, LONDON, W.C.1.

## Millions More

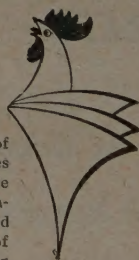
After the glamour of its annual conferences the Labour and Trade Union Movement continues its everyday and all-important task of winning public backing for its programme.

To counter propaganda from a hostile press there will be argument in meetings and on doorsteps. But to get Labour's message home the influence of its own DAILY HERALD must reach millions more workers—the people who make public opinion.

To win the fight the DAILY HERALD should be your paper and your fellow-workers' too. Order today.

# DAILY HERALD

**The Liveliest Paper—And Labour Too**



## MONEY—CASH BRASS—TIN

Call it what you like  
IT'S ALL

## FUNDS!!!

Send for our free fund-raising samples, only 3d. postage, to:—

**THE IDEAL PRINTERS**  
12, Midland Street, HULL

**THE "FUND-RAISING"  
SPECIALISTS**

**FULL UNION SHOP SINCE 1922**  
EST: 1919

*You must  
save money if  
you shop at the  
LONDON CO-OP*

**LONDONS LOWEST PRICES**  
... still further reduced  
by dividend



# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

PUBLISHED BY THE LABOUR PARTY, TRANSPORT HOUSE, SMITH SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.1

VOL. 33. NO. 389

SEPTEMBER, 1954

PRICE FIVEPENCE

## Two Good Chances for Live Agents

NEW BROKENRISE is an area which grew rapidly during the industrial development of the Home Counties between the wars.

It was one of the unexpected Labour victories of 1945, but was lost by the narrowest of majorities in 1950. At the last election, the Tory majority was just under 2,000 in a straight fight.

### FROM SOUTH WALES

Its electors include large numbers of men and women driven from South Wales and other 'special areas' during the depression, who found work in its new light industries. They are still regarded as outsiders by the indigenous inhabitants, most of whom seem to travel to Town each day to pursue undefined 'business' occupations.

There is no strong community feeling among the citizens of New Brokenrise, though, in recent years, council elections have been fiercely contested by the Labour Party and the 'Ratepayers', the Tories' *alias* locally.

Labour nearly won control in the first elections after the war. Losses were suffered in some subsequent elections, but with recent gains Labour is still strongly represented on the council, holding 13 of the 32 seats.

Labour Party organisation appears strong: the most recent report claims an individual membership of some 4,000 and

an income not far short of £2,000.

A close examination of the financial statement and balance sheet reveals weaknesses, however. Nearly £1,500 comes as donations from a supporters' club and only £500 is derived from more normal party activities.

Head Office is paid £100 for membership cards, but for many, Party membership cannot be much more than nominal because the total income from membership contributions is only £220, an average of little more than 1s. 1d. per member.

Affiliations from ten trade union branches bring in £37. A special appeal for the local election fund produces nearly £200, and there are two or three other smaller items of income.

The party rents an office from the Labour Club and employs a full-time agent and a clerk. Salaries, rent and other office expenses account for over £1,000 of the total expenditure.

Very little propaganda is undertaken centrally (though last year a localised edition of *Town and Country Post* was circulated and two town hall meetings were held), the wards are expected to do this work themselves. Very few do, except at election times. In fact, only three of the eight wards function really well, and of the others two are little more than paper organisations.

General Committee meetings have an average attendance of 40 delegates and a great deal of time is taken up with the discussion of policy questions, especially with reference to the local council.

Unfortunately, relations between the

General Committee and the Labour Group on the council are rather strained. Charges have been made that the Group is truckling to the Ratepayer majority on many issues, instead of pursuing a vigorous, independent line.

The charge is not only refuted, but there are counter-charges of lack of realism and demagogism against leading members of the General Committee. The Group Leader has openly refused to "waste his time at General Committee meetings" and his lead has been followed by several of the councillors. Most of the Group do play a prominent part in their ward activities and they are well supported by the live members.

The truth is that New Brokenrise is not a very happy party, and it is not surprising that the agent has decided to move.

### THE BARBARIAN NORTH

Birkrock is a town which is situated in the area regarded by Londoners as the barbarian North and by the Scots as the soft South. Though a product of the industrial revolution, and still boasting of its prosperous textile, steel and mining undertakings, it has kept up to date by encouraging firms engaged in chemicals, electrical engineering and aircraft manufacture to settle there.

A Labour Representation Committee was formed by local trade unions as long ago as 1900, and for some years before that the I.L.P. and S.D.F. carried on propaganda and contested elections, with little success, it must be confessed.

Seats were won on the local council and on the Board of Guardians before the first World War, but it was not until after the armistice that strong Labour Groups were formed on both the council and the Guardians.

There was even a Labour candidate in the 1918 'khaki' election and, though the coalition candidate was returned with a comfortable majority, the Labour man polled over 12,000; a very good vote considering that before the fight he had been serving a gaol sentence as a conscientious objector.

A Labour majority on the council was secured in 1925, the party taking full advantage of the dissatisfaction about housing and the treatment of the unemployed that was so widespread in the town. Birkrock's first Labour council was shortlived and the Tories returned to power in 1928. They stayed there until

1933, when they were beaten again by the Labour Party.

There was wild enthusiasm when a local trade unionist won the Parliamentary seat for Labour in the 1929 General Election, but Birkrock, like so many other constituencies, returned an unknown young Tory in the 'savings bank scare' election two years later.

The young Tory disappeared after the local man had his revenge in the 1932 General Election, and the Labour Member became one of the town's most respected citizens, being made a Freeman in 1945, on retiring from Parliament under a rule of his union.

Labour lost control of the council in 1938, though there were only a couple of seats in it, and during the war there was little of a controversial nature to cause strife between the parties. However, in 1946 Labour was swept into power and, despite one or two reverses since, has maintained a substantial majority.

With a new candidate, also a trade unionist but not a local man, Labour did well in 1945, winning the parliamentary seat with a majority of nearly 12,000 over the Tory. Even in 1951, when the Liberals came out to support a local solicitor who called himself a Conservative Liberal, the Labour majority was well over 7,000.

Despite its electoral successes, the party's organisation is far from strong. There are only 809 individual members though they are real members and last year subscriptions amounted to 4s. 3d. a member on the average.

### QUITE AN EVENT

The monthly General Committee meetings are quite an event, and everybody who is anybody in the party attends, as a delegate from either a party section or from an affiliated organisation. In addition to the co-operative society, 3 trade union branches are affiliated and out of a total of 127 delegates, the average attendance last year was 89.

The income of the party comes from membership fees (£170), trade union affiliations (£97), co-operative society political committee affiliation (£30), social committee grants (£230), grant from the union sponsoring the Parliamentary candidate (£250), miscellaneous (£128), the figures in brackets being last year's income from these sources.

Hyndman Hall, where the office is, is

(Continued on page 176)



## QUAIR'S PAGE

# She Came to Quiz

WHILE I was reading Pelling's *Challenge of Socialism*, the bell rang and when I went to the front door who should be there but a very attractive young woman.

I received her guardedly because I thought she might be wanting to press on me a large packet of some detergent which makes things whiter than white and brighter than the League of Youth which are being given away all over the country by the philanthropists who make that kind of stuff, but instead she asked me if I read a certain newspaper which I will not name as we do not give free advertisements in the *Labour Organiser*. I said "Yes" in a shamefaced manner and she brightened visibly and told me she represented some professional research organisation in London and she would like to ask me a few questions, so I said she had better come inside and she said that would be more comfortable than standing on the step, for at that very moment a sportive wind lifted her cotton frock several inches higher than the Dior Line, but of course I took no notice of that.

\* \* \*

SO I sat her down and she brought out a batch of forms and a pen and started questioning me about this and that and writing down my answers in a very businesslike fashion. When she asked me at what age my education had finished and I told her it isn't finished yet, I thought that put me one up, but she quickly recovered and said she meant how old was I when I left school and I said fifteen. Then she asked a lot more questions and filled up a large sheet with her own version of my enlightening answers and thanked me prettily for being so helpful to her and tripped off in search of another specimen to dissect.

\* \* \*

THIS little disturbance of the even tenor of my ways started me thinking. Why should the proprietors of a certain newspaper want to know more about me than the fellow next door or the Secretary of my Local Labour Party knows or cares? It is not just idle curiosity that leads

national newspapers and great business undertakings of all kinds to pay heavy fees to a specialist organisation that keeps an expensive, well-turned-out and competent staff ranging the country on these investigations.

They have discovered that an important factor in the successful prosecution of their activities is *to get to know all they can about their supporters*.

We shall do well in the Labour Party never to be too conceited to learn even from our opponents. We shall be all the more successful in our work the more we know about *our* supporters, and we do not need to pay an agency to obtain information for us. We can do it ourselves. The Local Labour Party whose record of membership is no more than a lot of names and addresses in a card index or a small notebook is inefficient and unimaginative. The Constituency Agent whose marked register contains a lot more than a multitude of ticks in coloured pencils is really getting to grips with his task.

\* \* \*

THEN there is the matter of education. We are not educated in our schools; we are furnished with the tools by which it becomes possible for us to acquire education. Released from school, we use, neglect, or misuse, the tools that have been handed to us.

Education of some sort is diffused every day everywhere. Sell a man a pamphlet and you contribute to his education; we don't sell half enough of them. Listen to him, and he may add to yours. A Ward Meeting may be an education in itself, sometimes in *how not to do it*.

Lastly, dear brethren, to all readers and especially to the League of Youth, I warmly recommend Pelling's book above-mentioned (advt.).

# There's nothing wrong with August

**W**HENEVER the subject of a rural campaign has been broached in the past, the question of timing arose.

When shall we have it? And then we go through all the months of the year and find that there are excuses in every month for not doing it.

January—It is too cold and in any case too dark at night. February—The same applies. March—Though it is not usually so cold then, especially in the latter half of the month, it is still too dark. April—You can never rely on the weather and in any case we are too busy preparing for the May Elections. May—Out of the question because of Elections. June—You won't be able to meet everyone because they are Haymaking. July—That is of no use because people will be on holidays and others busy Harvesting. August—The same applies only more so. September—Not quite so bad but farm workers are busy Harvesting. October—It is getting dark at night again and there is still some Harvesting to be done. November—It is normally foggy and in any case too dark at night. December—Impossible because people are busy preparing for Christmas.

And there we are, a perfectly good argument against doing anything at all. "Right," I said to myself, "not all the people will be Haymaking in June, and in any case there is no Haymaking going on in the town so let's have a Membership Campaign in the town." The result of the Membership Campaign in Bridgwater was 300 new members in two of the wards.

Now for the Rural Campaign. "Bank Holiday Week," I said. Members looked at me aghast and I am sure some of them thought I must be going off my rocker. "Why?" one of them asked meekly, hoping I would tell him it was a good joke. "Because our prospective candidate is on holiday and he can combine seeing the beauty spots of the constituency with making himself known to the electors."

But most members still thought it was just a crazy notion and that it would never come off. I informed all the local parties in the Minehead area of the constituency that the prospective candidate would be addressing loudspeaker meetings in all the

villages in their area during Bank Holiday Week, starting off with a meeting of all secretaries and delegates to the Sub-Divisional Council on July 31st. In the evening of that day, meetings would be held in a number of places. On Tuesday the following week, and for the rest of that week, meetings would be held in every village within the sub-division.

True, there were only very few delegates at the meeting on the Saturday, and having had some bad news with regards to a car that was supposed to transport members into the villages for distribution of leaflets, the outlook was not exactly very bright.

All the same, we started off that Saturday night and were quite successful in holding 12 open-air meetings, and the prospective candidate was able to speak personally to quite a number of people after he had addressed them over the loudspeaker. During the coming days he addressed 62 meetings altogether and at the end of the week he had made quite a number of friends and I was able to take a number of names and addresses of supporters who are willing to help us whenever a General Election comes along.

**F. Phillips**

## Candidates

**T**HE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary Candidates at the July meeting of the National Executive Committee:

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Abingdon ...         | Mrs. M. Reid       |
| North Cornwall ...   | Mr. V. E. Cornford |
| West Dorset ...      | Mr. L. W. King     |
| Isle of Thanet ...   | Mr. K. Jones       |
| Berwick-on-Tweed ... | Mr. J. Frater      |
| Chippenhams ...      | Mr. W. J. Smith    |



### WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURES

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| Wokingham ...  | Mr. H. Marlow |
| Canterbury ... | Mr. K. Jones  |



# HOW LEEDS CLEARED ITS DEBTS

by R. C. WALLIS

WHEN, in 1932, I applied for the position of Secretary of the Leeds Labour Party, I was only partly aware of the problems which faced the successful applicant, but upon appointment my enlightenment was immediate.

The party had been weakened by internal dissensions, its organisation was weak, its membership—individual and affiliated—deplorably low and its finances unsound.

The income of the party in recent years had been much less than its expenditure and a similar situation existed in the Leeds Labour Publishing Society, which was responsible for the Labour weekly, *The Leeds Weekly Citizen*.

On the assets side was a party with a great municipal record, a virile trade union movement and, as I was later to learn, a body of comrades unsurpassed in any part of the country.

A review of the situation made it clear that the financial situation could only be resolved by two lines of action:

First, the development of existing forms of income, viz: affiliation fees, etc., to the point where income exceeded expenditure; and

Second, a special effort to liquidate all or part of existing debts.

## CONTINUOUS WORK

Of these the first was obviously a long-term effort involving continuous work amongst trade union district committees and branches and in the ward committees. In fact, this task continued over the four years that I was in Leeds, but by the end of that time the income of the party was doubled and its financial position secure.

The purpose of this article is not, however, to deal with that part of the work, but to set out in some detail the steps taken to liquidate the existing debts.

After considering a number of schemes, I concluded that one large and special effort was required. I recommended to

the Executive Committee that a large, city bazaar should be held at Christmas 1934, that was eighteen months ahead.

The proposal had a very mixed reception. Apparently, many years before a similar effort had been disappointing in results. Some held the view that we could not secure wholehearted support from the city as a whole. Fortunately others were enthusiastic and optimistic.

## PROJECT APPROVED

Finally the project was approved and, in view of its success, the main features of its planning may be of assistance to others contemplating similar events.

*Timing.* However small, or large, a bazaar, for success, must be planned well ahead. The basis of success will be work done beforehand, and not less than a year is required. The event should be planned for a good selling period and pre-Christmas is undoubtedly the best. Whilst our Leeds effort was a three-day affair, one day would normally be adequate to a single constituency.

*Working Parties.* The aim of the organisers should be to secure that all goods on the stalls are made, or paid for, beforehand. Buying things for sale is the lazy and unprofitable way. In Leeds every ward chose a stall from a long list which was circulated, and the wards and the women's section which were allocated the 'millinery' stall, worked for 12 months to stock their stalls.

*Individual Efforts.* Most good socialists are individualists and like competition! As many members as possible should be cajoled into raising a fixed sum—in the case of Leeds £1—by whatever methods they care to choose. Children should be encouraged to work for, or collect money, and to hand up purses at the bazaar.

*Special Efforts.* A bazaar draw, or similar money raising effort, should be organised early on to provide money for the purchase of materials for working parties, etc. Goods can be sold during the working period to purchase still larger quantities of materials.

*Saving Up.* From the commencement of the effort bazaar coupons should be on sale through every party organisation and by the maximum number of members. In

this way adequate purchasing power amongst members and supporters can be assured.

*Staging.* The bazaar must be properly staged. A few undecorated trestle tables in an unattractive hall will not do. At Leeds our bazaar was held in the town hall and scenery was hired so that the whole affair was a set piece. A choice of scenery is available to meet all needs.

*Sideshows.* The objective is to make money and suitable sideshows should be provided, preferably in a separate room, for this purpose. Many people come to a bazaar for the day, or half day, and entertainments should be provided to keep them interested and amused.

### OUTSTANDING FIGURE

*Opening.* A suitable outstanding figure in politics, or entertainment, should be booked well ahead for an opening ceremony, which should, however, be short. The name will help in publicity.

*Publicity.* The event should be constantly publicised. Every circular, letter, etc. should refer to the bazaar and its date. Nearer the date adequate publicity through press and poster should be secured.

Much more could be written on the subject but space forbids. A bazaar is a great communal effort in which the maximum number should play their parts. As in Leeds it can be a happy, comradesly, co-operative effort. New and lasting friends will be made both personally and for the Party. It can be a great adventure.

Incidentally—Leeds cleared its debts.

### Trip to Singapore

Singapore Socialist Party wants a man or woman, having initiative and personality, with a practical knowledge of organisation and of political theory, to go to Singapore for twelve months, to organise the head office and the branches in preparation for a General Election next year.

The Labour Party has no responsibility at all for the appointment, but those intending to apply for the post and requiring further information should write to the National Agent at Transport House.

## SIMPLE METHOD

GOING back through some fifty numbers of the *Organiser* much can be found about the merits of this and that method of recording membership and subscriptions. Doubtless, some of the advice given has been put to good use, but it is my experience that few parties possess any kind of record that is simple to maintain and which will speedily turn out all the needed information about membership.

The reason for this may well be that the methods so far described have had the appearance of being too involved. Because of that they may have been rejected out of hand, for anything demanding irksome and unnecessary desk-work will repel most people.

Nevertheless, it will be generally accepted that there is a need, if not a desire, for a uniform method of recording membership and subscriptions in a way that could be adopted and easily maintained by all parties, whether the secretary be full-time or not.



The form of index illustrated here has been subjected to examination by the back-room boys, and as I have now been asked to say something about it, I am hoping that this practical co-operation will be extended to the point whereby all parties may be given the opportunity to use it.

It is strange how some ideas are born. For the want of a card of suitable size on which to do a rough draft, I took an 'Application for Membership' card and used the back. I took it home to think about it. My wife picked it up from my end of the mantelpiece and said, "Hello! what's this, a new idea?" I told her I was thinking of having some printed in Newport. "Why not use these cards and ask Head Office to print the index on the back?—They'll be much cheaper." she added with the feminine sense of economy.

Well, it wasn't the cost I was thinking about, but the idea of making the application card serve a dual purpose intrigued me. And that it could, at the same time, provide a ready-made index card for all parties really appealed to me. Anyway, if an idea is worth anything at all, it is



# RECORDING MEMBERSHIP

by  
**EDGAR PLASTOW**

worth passing on.

If it is believed that a good many parties could do with a simple method of controlling membership and subscriptions; and if my idea is one which stands a fair chance of being widely accepted, why not ask Head Office to have future supplies of application cards printed both sides?

It would be cheaper done in bulk, and it would encourage parties to build up a card index. The only waste would be in using the one side for existing members, but in parties like Newport, where we are planning to increase membership, a bulk supply of cards at a cheap rate would be a boon.

I make no claim that this idea is the

be all and end all of systems, but it at least provides a record of the things which are a 'must' in any index. Little else of real use can be added. To attempt to do so would be to defeat the idea—and that is, uniformity in a system which demands little time to maintain, but does the job. If that is what others have been looking for, then we've made a move in the right direction.



*If readers interested in using the membership application card, published by the Labour Party, as a record card approve of Mr. Plastow's suggestion that it be printed in bulk we are prepared to examine the proposal.*

*However, because of the small saving bulk printing would effect and the likelihood of parties wishing to introduce variations to meet local needs we incline to the view that local printing is a more practical proposition.—EDITOR.*

Surname

Address

Other names  
Mr/Mrs/Miss

Joined

Ward

P.D.

## Subscriptions Paid

| Qtr.  | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 | Remarks               |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------------------|
| 1st   |    |    |    |    |    |    | Removed to            |
| 2nd   |    |    |    |    |    |    |                       |
| 3rd   |    |    |    |    |    |    |                       |
| 4th   |    |    |    |    |    |    | Ward notified         |
| Total |    |    |    |    |    |    | Labour Party notified |
| Arr's |    |    |    |    |    |    | RPF 8 sent            |

*This side for office use only*

# RUN A USEFUL PARTY

**H**AS your Party ever run a week-end school? Now's the time to start planning one for the autumn or winter months when centres are relatively easy to book and members are not so busily engaged in election work or outdoor pursuits.

We ran our first school last December at a Holiday Fellowship Guest House. The agent wanted some new ideas infused into the ward organisation and the political education officer, realising that most political arguments break down through lack of knowledge or tolerance, wished to train some discussion group leaders and to ensure that members of the school were equipped with a body of facts with which to discuss the *Challenge to Britain* pamphlet in their wards.

This led us to choose as the subject of the school, 'Problems of Organisation and Policy in the second half of the Twentieth Century', a title intended to imply that socialists should move with the times.

★ ★ ★

The political education officer, who organised the school, booked the centre two months in advance by making a provisional reservation for a maximum of 30 places. His proposals for running the school, an estimate of the cost per head, and an outline of what it was hoped would be achieved, were put to the E.C. and approved.

Each ward, Women's Section, and League of Youth branch was then asked to award three scholarships, helped by a Constituency Labour Party subsidy of one-third of the cost per head as tangible proof of the importance attached to the venture.

When the nominations were received a duplicated letter was sent to each intending student expressing pleasure that he/she would be attending the school on..... at....., and giving the time and place of departure by coach from a central point on the Saturday and approximate time of return on Sunday. It also stated that 'your accommodation and meals and your place on the coach have been booked and paid for' (a white lie), and added that further details would be sent later.

This preliminary personal letter is important: it is a written reminder at an early date of something merely heard at a meeting, and it more or less obliges the student to attend yet gives him the opportunity of withdrawing (which none did) early enough for the organiser to avoid paying a deposit for an unfilled place should a substitute not be forthcoming.

The lecturers were booked at the same time as the preliminary letters were sent because it was necessary to know at that stage what accommodation and meals they would require and whether they wished to travel in the party coach.

We were now ready to book a coach of sufficient size and to confirm the provisional booking of the centre by sending a per capita deposit (the balance was paid on arrival) and a list of names, grouped according to age and sex, showing married couples and others who were willing to share rooms. This enabled the manageress to allocate room numbers on arrival with no confusion or loss of time.

The organiser made a preliminary visit to the centre to find out such details as times of meals, facilities, and the number of rooms available for discussion groups. It was decided that three groups were possible, each in a separate room, one of which would also be used for the lectures.

Head Office was very helpful in finding the lecturers. The organiser did not insist on having M.P.s, who, though invariably willing, are somewhat overworked and usually engaged in their constituencies at week-ends. He did, however, ask for speakers who were especially suitable for political education work.

We were fortunate to secure an officer of the National Agent's Department for the Saturday lecture on 'Organisation—the Key to Success' and a young prospective parliamentary candidate who was well qualified to speak on Sunday about 'Policy for the Next Labour Government', with the emphasis on what is attainable, a distinct from what is desirable.



# WEEK-END SCHOOL

These subjects were suggested by the speakers after the organiser had given broad details of the aim of the school. By request, the speakers sent a synopsis of their talks—just brief lecture notes—and three broad topics for discussion after their lectures, one for each of the groups, together with some of the points which could be dealt with under each topic.

★ ★ ★

This material was duplicated and sent to the students for prior study a fortnight before the school started. Each knew to which discussion group he would be assigned and therefore what he could concentrate on and look up beforehand. Also included was a suggested book list (don't overdo this!), a detailed time-table and agenda, and a list of things to bring, such as a pencil and notebook, soap and towel, and perhaps music and a camera.

A few days before we set out they were sent a final reminder and some directions for travel by public transport should anyone miss the coach—a gentle hint that it would not wait, but also very useful for members who might be genuinely delayed through unforeseen circumstances. (One member came later by motor-cycle.)

Full travel directions and times were also sent to the lecturers, whose expenses were met when they arrived. Fraternal greetings were sent to the Constituency Labour Party in whose area the school was to be held, inviting the president and agent to attend as guests for all or part of the week-end.

★ ★ ★

Came the day, everything ran smoothly with everyone knowing what to do and where to be at any particular time. This was the programme for Saturday: 2.30 p.m., Coach leaves. 3.45, Arrive at Centre. 4.15, Meet in Lower Common Room. Introduction by Political Education Officer and Party President of all present, one by one. 4.30-5.0, Tea. 5.10-6.15, First Lecture: Mr. ...., National Agent's Department, 'Organisation—the Key to Success'. Chairman, Party Agent. 6.15-6.30, Questions. 6.30-7.30, Discussion Group Work. 7.40, Dinner. 8.30, Free Evening.

The lecturer made special reference to election work in our constituency, which he termed 'a marginal seat'. For this purpose he was sent details of membership and local election results for the previous two years.

Each discussion group had a previously-chosen leader who was helped, as was every member of the group, by the questions already circulated and largely based on the lecture. Under the heading of 'Leadership', Group 1 in the Lower Common Room discussed 'Assumption of responsibility; the extent and nature of leadership; its effect on members; the right man doing the right job; ability to draw the maximum out of others; to plan ahead; the qualities of leadership'.

★ ★ ★

In the Small Dining Room, Group 2 dealt with 'Administration': 'The relationship between officers and members; what should be expected of officers? Should office be given for "services rendered" irrespective of ability? How much more is it than sitting on the platform as against the floor?'

Group 3 in the Upper Common Room covered 'Public Relations', delving into 'The extent to which the Party should be identified with public as well as political matters; the extent of those actions; the personal approach on the doorstep; the general approach by way of meetings, etc.; the effect of radio and television in shaping views'.

The printed questions for discussion were greatly appreciated by the inexperienced discussion group leaders because they helped them to keep the discussion on relevant lines and there was no danger of its drying up.

Nor was the discussion incomplete or lop-sided, for the other members, being able to see what was to be covered, did not prolong discussion of minor items to the exclusion of others.

The prior circulation of discussion topics also encouraged the timorous to participate and gave less chance for the vociferous to monopolise the discussion. The lecturer and agent moved from room to room taking everything in and answering any

sticky points that were put to them.

Each group had a reporter, also previously chosen, who took notes from which he compiled a short report of his group's findings for the Reports and General Forum Session on Sunday.

Sunday's programme was as follows: 9.0 a.m., Breakfast. 9.45-11.30, Second Lecture: Mr....., Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for....., 'Policy for the Next Labour Government'. Chairman, Political Education Officer. Questions to follow. 11.30, Coffee. 11.45-12.45, Discussion Group Work, again based on the lecture, using questions previously circulated and studied.

★ ★ ★

Saturday's reporters became leaders and vice versa. Between them the three groups discussed 'This Shrinking World', 'Britain's Changing Position in the World', and 'Internal Planning and Priorities', this last topic being sub-divided into 'Enlarging the Cake' and 'Sharing the Cake more Fairly'.

The afternoon's programme went like this: 1.0 p.m., Lunch. 2.0-4.30, Reports and General Forum. Chairman, Mrs....., our own prospective Parliamentary Candidate. The six reporters each gave a fifteen minute summary of the findings of their groups, the three reports on Organisation being received first. There followed a free-for-all discussion with the platform chipping in, after which the three policy reports were heard and similarly discussed.

**It was surprising what valuable ground had been covered by splitting into small groups and giving everyone an opportunity of contributing something.**

As one member put it afterwards, "In a different environment we discussed in a rational way topics which would have made us hot under the collar back home." From 4.30-4.50 the lecturers summed up and thanks were expressed. Then we had tea, and left for home at 5.30 p.m.

A verbal report was given to the next meeting of the General Committee, though a duplicated report compiled from the reporters' notes would have been of greater value because the discussions on the groups' findings were continued at subsequent ward meetings. Incidentally, discussions, which demand open minds and a readiness to concede, are generally more profitable than motions which the movers set out to pass at all costs, choosing the

facts to suit their case and hoping that people will not spot omissions.

At a week-end residential school you can delve into problems more deeply and for a longer continuous period than is possible at the ordinary ward or general committee meeting. You can pool ideas and learn from each other. We sometimes become so engrossed in our practical work for socialism that we fail to find time to reflect, philosophically, on whether we are working on the most efficient lines or are equipped with sufficient knowledge to carry out our work effectively.

Whatever method you use in running your week-end school, it is essential to plan well ahead and thoroughly. Introduce a variety of sessions, speakers and chairmen. Make the composition of your school as representative as possible, not forgetting to include officers and older members so that no one will feel that political education is needed by some but not by others.

**Make your programme full and purposeful: you cannot justify using Party money for a week-end joy-ride. Base your work on factual information with the emphasis on constructive thought, not mere Tory-bashing.**

That is how we ran our first week-end school. I like to feel that it contributed towards our five Labour gains last May and to an improvement in the quality of motions submitted to the General Committee.

**Peter Blake**

---

## **Buy these two important publications**

- **Election Charts and Forms**  
1/2d. post free
- **Practical Illustrations of  
Committee Rooms**  
1/8d. post free

*Obtainable from the Publications Dept.*

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>THE LABOUR PARTY</b> | <b>TRANSPORT HOUSE</b> |
| <b>SMITH SQUARE</b>     | <b>S.W.1</b>           |



# ELECTION COURSES A SUCCESS

by L. G. Sims

IN the late 1920's the Agent's Association pressed for a Study Course on Electoral Law, Registration and Party Organisation, the purpose being to improve the knowledge and standing of agents, and for the proficient to obtain a certificate to show that they had reached a required standard.

The suggestion was accepted by the National Executive Committee in 1929, but was extended to cover Party officers as well. Mr. Harold Croft was given the responsibility of drafting and supervising the project.

## SCHEME BEGAN

So began a scheme that has continued and developed over the years.

The first prospectus was issued in 1930, and, to use the words of Harold Croft, "The response was wholesale—over 315 applications. This was very embarrassing as I was still having to give some time as District Organiser to the Home and Southern Counties, and there were all the remaining booklets to be written!" However, with co-operation, the scheme was launched and help was given in marking the papers.

Needless to say, many students in those days—as now—failed to stay the course, but nevertheless the agents were able to obtain a certificate and party officials a proficiency certificate.

In spite of teething difficulties, General Elections, and the complete redrafting of study papers to meet changes in electoral law and registration procedure, the courses have developed until now we have a Grade A Course for full-time practising agents, and another for officials and key workers in the Party, who take the Diploma Study Course.

The Grade A Course is naturally the more comprehensive of the two, comprising 11 study papers covering electoral law, the Party structure and constitution, practical organisation, registration and administration.

The Diploma Study Course has eight study papers covering similar subjects,

but confining itself to Local Government procedure. This is natural and desirable as the number of persons called upon to act as election agents in local elections is considerable.

It has been the practice over the past few years to invite Constituency Labour Parties to nominate one student for enrolment in the Diploma Course. This was done in an effort to get every part of the country covered.

The fee of £1, which includes all necessary books and leaflets, has been kept low so as not to debar anyone from enrolling. The main cost of the scheme, which is quite heavy, is borne by the Party, as it is considered to be a necessary and important service. Because of this, and also the need to enrol only those who are desirous of becoming full-time agents, or who wish to improve their knowledge in order to serve the Party more efficiently in a voluntary capacity, an undertaking is required from the students to complete the course.

Another feature of the Diploma Course is that it deals with specific procedures just in advance of their coming into operation. For instance, registration of electors is dealt with prior to the publication of the electors lists, and Local Government electoral procedure is taken immediately prior to the spring elections.

## PAPERS TIMED

In both courses test questions are set and the papers are timed at monthly intervals. This gives the student a reasonable period in which to study, make notes and complete the answer paper. It is often the case of the busy person undertaking the course and having to fit it in with his other work. One of the advantages accruing from the course is not only the additional knowledge it gives, but learning how to organise oneself to get the maximum work (and leisure) out of the time available.

It must be emphasised that enrolment is restricted to experienced key workers. It has been found that young, though keen, members with little background, have not been able to meet the standard required. Those who have practical experience find the course much easier

and can fully appreciate the remarks and notes made on the answer paper.

After the study papers, come the examinations; both written and oral. These are held at centres throughout the country. For instance, this year examinations have been held at Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, Birmingham, Cardiff, Bristol and Manchester, with four examinations in London to cover the Southern and Eastern Counties as well as London itself.

### **SPECIAL STUDIES**

Special courses are arranged from time to time to meet given circumstances. Because of the likelihood of a General Election it has been decided to defer the next Diploma Study Course and institute a special study course for those members

who will be acting as an agent for the first time at the General Election:

Many Constituency Labour Parties have difficulty in finding a person who can undertake this position of responsibility, or obtain the necessary time off from work at short notice. It is the party's duty, therefore, when such a person has been found to see that he has all the help and guidance possible. This special course, therefore, is based on what is considered to be the most practical way of achieving this. It comprises four study papers and includes all the appropriate acts and regulations and Party publications, and costs one guinea.

It must be stressed that enrolment in this special study course is confined to those who will be acting as Election Agents at the next General Election.

## **Little Change in Wales**

**B**OTH the Welsh and the Northern Ireland Parliamentary Boundary Commissions have made their provisional recommendations.

In the case of Northern Ireland, no changes are recommended, but in the case of Wales, there are recommendations concerning Swansea East and Swansea West, and Carmarthen and Llanelly.

In the case of the Swansea constituencies, in fact, no real changes are involved: all that has happened is that since the last Parliamentary redistribution there has been a redistribution and a renaming of wards within each of the two constituencies, and though there is no change recommended in the Parliamentary boundaries, the new names of the wards have to be taken into account.

In the case of Llanelly and Carmarthen, the change recommended is the transfer of about 100 electors from Carmarthen to Llanelly.

### **IN BELFAST**

The Northern Ireland Labour Party made submissions to the Boundary Commission with respect to the boundaries of the four Belfast constituencies.

The party suggested that the disparity between Belfast East (62,000 electors), Belfast North (76,000), and Belfast West (78,000) was too great, but the Commission

stated that it did not consider it was suitable to make changes at present when population figures were fluctuating considerably because of new development schemes.

The number of Welsh constituencies, by law, may not be fewer than 25, and there will continue to be 26 Welsh constituencies as at present.

The number of Northern Ireland constituencies, by law, is fixed at 10.

With the publication of these recommendations, the first stage of the Boundary Commissions' review of the United Kingdom Parliamentary Constituencies has been completed.

### **QUOTE L99777**

**T**HE Labour Party now has a Co-operative Society Trading Number. By occasionally quoting L99777 when purchasing at Co-ops in the national membership scheme, individual members and affiliated organisations can help the Party's national funds.



# 600 Candidates Wanted

by H. RENWICK

THIS article is written in the belief that it will be of interest to the many readers of the *Labour Organiser* who are associated with the large and chiefly rural county constituencies of which a proportion must be won if Labour is to have a majority in the House of Commons.

Saffron Walden is a typical county constituency, covering many square miles of beautiful Essex country. It consists largely of sparsely inhabited villages.

At the last General Election there were 47,836 electors of whom 82.7 per cent voted. The result of the election gives the measure of the promise which the constituency offers to our party:

|                           |        |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Butler, R. A. (Con.) ...  | 20,564 |
| Groves, R. (Lab.) ...     | 15,245 |
| Smedley, W. O. (Lib.) ... | 3,774  |
| <hr/>                     |        |
| Conservative majority     | 5,319  |

It is with some trepidation that I write about the constituency, since I have had only three short months in which to look around this north western tip of Essex, which borders Hertfordshire at Bishops Stortford, Suffolk at Haverhill and Sudbury, and Cambridgeshire at Great Chesterford.

I have already discovered that we shall need approximately 600 candidates for the local elections in 1955. How is this figure made up? The Saffron Walden rural district has 44 rural district councillors and 178 parish councillors. The Halstead rural district has 38 rural district and 177 parish councillors; and as the Dunmow rural district is of a similar type, 600 is roughly the total of candidates required.

We have, too, the Saffron Walden borough council in a district which is almost certainly a Labour stronghold. Yet on this council we have, in fact, only two members. In the town of Saffron Walden, the Local Labour Party derives most of its stability from the Women's Section, whose members claim that they are the Labour Party.

Local parties in the constituency cover

two or three parishes or villages, as at Newport and Elsenham, where parties of 80 and 120 members respectively flourish. There are some 23 local parties all told in the constituency, but as yet there is only one affiliated trade union, namely, the National Union of Agricultural Workers. A recent survey of the trade unions reveals that there are 11 possible affiliations embodying 67 branches. If one omits the N.U.A.W. with its 43 branches, there is not much left to work on. But contact has been made with all the remaining trade unions.

My offices are a problem for the constituency party but, by the time you read this, the position may have changed. A Labour Hall exists in Saffron Walden and one room on the premises is the office. But the word 'dilapidated' hardly gives a fair picture of this 'office', the only frequent visitors to which are some stray cats, whose presence I strongly suspected prior to their appearance.

Possible alternative premises have been found, and these have a shop window and face the street, whereas the present accommodation has no 'look-out' at all, being tucked away down a passage at the back of the Market Square.

Meetings of the General Committee are held at strategic points in the constituency at bi-monthly intervals. There has been an average attendance of 36 members per meeting this year. Meetings of the Executive committee are held monthly and are attended by an average of 15 out of a possible maximum of 20 members.

At present we have only 1,500 party members and it is not surprising that the acting treasurer cannot always give a glowing picture of the accounts.

It is, of course, a great encouragement to our party to have such a formidable opponent as the Chancellor of the Exchequer as the sitting member for the constituency. His actions at the Treasury conveniently weld together all our members and affiliated organisations in the determination to ensure a Labour triumph in Saffron Walden.

(Continued from page 164)

owned by the party, has a separate account and is a self-supporting venture.

The social committee organises a Christmas draw, a bazaar or a similar event and three big dances at the baths, each year, as well as a small weekly whist drive at Hyndman Hall and a variety of other small events. There is no large football competition, but one of the wards runs a small scheme for its own members.

The wards hold regular social events, including theatre trips in the winter and coach outings in the summer, to finance their activities, as they receive no share of the membership subscriptions.

It is admitted that party income is too small and that there is little left after the agent has been paid, but so long as there is a sponsored candidate, the party feels that it can rub along quite well.

### AGENT SINCE 1929

There has been a full-time agent since 1929, and the present agent has had the job for nineteen years. He is an alderman and a member of the Regional Hospital Board. He is retiring shortly, and intends to devote the whole of his time to public work.

There is a committee in each ward, but despite the regular collection of subscriptions, which is organised centrally, only a few members attend meetings regularly in most wards. Strangely enough, the liveliest is a ward which has not yet been won in any council election.

The Member visits the constituency at least once a month while Parliament is sitting. He has no regular 'surgery' but he does a great deal of case work for his constituents, in which he is helped by the agent, who is very good when dealing with human problems.

Public meetings on national issues are rare, but there are occasional meetings in the wards on local affairs at which usually the speakers are councillors.

At the local elections a centrally printed election address is circulated to each elector, and nearly always there is an attractive broadsheet as well as leaflets and posters.

The wards take financial responsibility for their own candidatures and are helped by generous grants from the co-op and unions when their nominees are candidates.

Relations between the Council Group

and the party are most cordial. The Group Leader is the party treasurer and nearly all the executive committee are on the council.

Since a great slum clearance scheme and the changing over from trams to trolley and petrol buses, just before the war, there has been little that is outstanding in Labour's control of local affairs.

It is generally recognised that the Labour municipal administration is sound, if not very imaginative these days, but the Group has plans for building a comprehensive school and the conversion of a derelict waste near the steel works into a flower garden and playing field. It is expected that both projects will cause a great deal of controversy locally.

*New Brokenrise and Birkrock Constituency Labour Parties are not listed at Transport House. In fact, they exist only in the head of the Editor. They do represent, however, two common types of actual Constituency Labour Parties.*

*Readers are asked to imagine that they have been appointed agent to New Brokenrise, or to Birkrock. Articles are invited in which an imaginary agent spotlights the more serious faults of his new party and describes how he proposes to deal with them.*

## NEW AGENTS

THE following Agency appointments have been approved by the National Executive Committee:

**MR. CYRIL SMITH**—as Secretary-Agent for **Heywood and Royton**. Mr. Smith has been full-time agent for Ashton-under-Lyne since June, 1951. He is 25.

**MR. G. W. BAKER**—as Secretary-Agent for **Brigg**. Mr. Baker has been full-time agent for 2½ years, first at Bedford and then at Bradford South. He is 43.

**MR. H. NICHOL**—as Secretary-Agent for **Banbury**. Mr. Nichol has held various Party offices during his 27 years' Labour Party membership, but this is his first full-time agency; previously he was a master in a Secondary School.

**MR. J. ROBERTS**—as Secretary-Agent for **Sudbury and Woodbridge**. Mr. Roberts has been full-time agent for the Isle of Thanet since 1949. He is 51.



## Around the Regions

# PREPARING FOR COUNTY FIGHTS

**P**REPARATIONS for next year's West Midlands County elections represent considerable advancement.

The region covers six counties—Herefordshire, with only five Labour members against 69; Oxfordshire, 9—53; Shropshire, 7—50; Warwickshire, 15—69; Worcestershire, 24—88; and Staffordshire with a Labour majority of 53 to 41.

In all but Herefordshire, County Committees function under the Regional Council; in particular, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire have regular quarterly meetings, and keep close contact with the Labour Group.

At previous elections, a small sub-committee in each county had to draft a policy statement for local use. This time, in four counties a more democratic and ambitious procedure is being followed.

For Staffordshire, our largest county, with a Labour majority, the Regional Organiser acts as secretary to the County Committee. Soon after the 1952 elections council committee chairmen were asked to submit reports on the services provided and recommendations for future policy. It has taken two years for those reports to be presented and in July the regional office drew up a 12-page policy memorandum.

This has been issued to ten constituency parties, 95 local parties and 70 ward committees, and amendments have been invited. The memorandum and amendments will be considered at a county conference on 9th October. Representation is from each Constituency Labour Party and county electoral division, with members of the County Group ex-officio with voting powers. Other nominees to the Panel of Candidates may be ex-officio without voting powers.

The conference will not only lay down policy, but will help to give a better understanding of the work of the County Council.

Almost identical procedure is being followed in Worcestershire, with its con-

ference on 30th October, and in Warwickshire with its conference on 6th November. Shropshire has a conference on 9th October to consider a policy statement, but amendments will not be submitted in advance.

In Staffordshire the first invitation to submit nominations was sent out as far back as February. It takes considerable time for the party's machinery to work on such matters; reminders had to be sent out and then many nominees chased for the return of their completed questionnaires. Despite this, the panel giving details of 63 possible candidates was sent out at the end of July. There are, however, 71 electoral divisions, and as 63 were contested in 1952, further nominations are anticipated and will be included in a supplementary panel.

Warwickshire and Worcestershire also have the issue of the panel well in hand. Shropshire and Oxfordshire, although not so far advanced, are also giving this attention.

County Committees will then push parties to select their candidates, and encourage contests in the more difficult areas.

In 1952 the Regional Office, with the co-operation of Head Office, produced a Staffordshire issue of *Town and Country Post* with three pages devoted entirely to County material, and the front page as the local election address. 181,400 copies were supplied, covering 43 separate local issues embracing 47 candidates. It is

---

## POSTAL VOTING

*A pamphlet giving full details of postal and proxy voting. A leaflet designed for distribution.*

### THE POSTAL VOTE (12-page pamphlet)

One copy 4d.; 12 copies 1/8; 50 copies 5/-

### POSTAL VOTING (2-page leaflet)

10/- per 1000 copies

Both post free

---

THE LABOUR PARTY — PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

---

planned to repeat this in 1955, for the loss of only four seats will lose control of the county.

I hesitate to think what happened before the regional organisation was established. Now the County Committees, with regional direction, are steadily building a county outlook, and improving administration in the Party's most difficult unit—the County.

West Midlands H. R. UNDERHILL

## Scottish Unions

**T**HERE are quite a number of Scottish trade unions which have no political rules and are not affiliated to the Labour Party. The total membership involved is just over 50,000. Though these unions are small and sometimes local in character, the larger trade union movement in Scotland views this situation with concern, and at our last Annual Conference a resolution was carried asking us to take the necessary steps to approach the non-affiliated unions.

First of all, we wrote and offered to meet the officers or the Executive Committees. Several accepted the offer, and from these interviews the machinery has been set in motion.

The Registrar for Scotland supplied us with the necessary forms of guidance.

Trade unions, whether registered or unregistered, which desire to apply any part of their funds to the furtherance of political objects within the meaning of the Trade Union Act 1913, must comply with prescribed procedure.

A resolution must be passed by a majority of the members voting on a ballot approving the furtherance of political objects as an object of the union. The ballot must be conducted in accordance with rules of the union approved by the Registrar. The Registrar has to be satisfied that every member has an equal right and a fair opportunity of voting, and, of course, the secrecy of the ballot has to be properly secured.

Before a ballot is taken, rules for the ballot must be adopted by the union and approved by the Registrar. These rules apply only to the ballot and do not supersede the union's existing rules for the

ordinary purposes of the union. Sets of model rules are available from the Registrar.

One method provides for a ballot at the general office of the union; another provides for a ballot at the branches, the votes being counted at the branches; and the third method provides for a ballot at the branches and the votes being counted at the general office.

The adoption or modification of any of these forms depends on whether the Registrar considers the particular circumstances justify and is best calculated to carry out the conditions imposed by the Act.

The union's Executive Committee should therefore in the early stages submit two copies of the ballot rules for preliminary approval, and if the union is not registered, should also send the Registrar a copy of the existing rules of the union. If the union votes for the adoption of the rules before submitting them for preliminary approval, it may transpire that the rules cannot be approved by the Registrar, which means repeating the process, with consequent delay, expense and exasperation!

Rules for the Political Fund must be approved by the Registrar. Preliminary approval should be obtained for them at the same time as for the ballot rules. This allows the union to adopt both sets of rules at the same time and avoids considerable delay.

A form of resolution can be prepared to the effect that the ballot rules be adopted and a ballot taken under them, and if the ballot is in favour of the furtherance of political objects, the rules for the political fund be adopted.

In one process, therefore, the union can deal with these matters either through (a) the Executive Committee or other governing body of the union; (b) in the manner already provided by the rules of the union for the alteration of rules; (c) by a majority of the members voting for the purpose; or (d) where the union rules provide for voting by delegates, or where delegates have been appointed with power to alter the rules—by a majority vote of the delegates.

After the passing of the resolution and before the ballot is held two copies signed



by seven members must be sent to the Registrar for final approval.

The ballot must take place in strict compliance with the rules.

Returns of the ballot must be sent to the Registrar, and if the returns show a majority for the furtherance of political objects, two copies of the rules for the political fund should also be sent for final approval signed by seven members.

Two unions are having their ballot next month—covering 12,000 members, and another has passed the resolution referred to earlier. So we are making some progress.

Scottish

W. G. MARSHALL

## Intelligent Approach

FOUR years ago, X Ward was like so many others, mainly owner-occupied in character, and a heartache to the Constituency Labour Party. A handful of enthusiasts, however, decided to concentrate on improving their membership, which was then only 80, following the normal procedure of canvassing the known Labour supporters revealed in the municipal election canvass.

They also sensibly decided that they would only canvass where they were certain that a collector could be secured, to keep in touch with the new members, and they made it more or less a point of honour that the collector should visit the members monthly.

A further decision was that a monthly bulletin should be issued, partly because members who pay yearly, tend to be overlooked. This not only gives news of party activities, but also contains 'Talking Points', on both municipal and national affairs. These are kept brief and simple, and the collectors say that members appear to look forward to receiving this monthly statement of party work and information.

When a new housing estate was at its completion point, a little printed card was placed in each house, giving a welcome to the new tenants, and stating the time and place of party meetings, and that a representative would call on them in due course.

As a result of the methods adopted, not only were a large number of new members

enrolled, but additional collectors were recruited, and a great improvement was made in the attendance at meetings, which in turn gave a further impetus to more membership canvassing, and the running of social activities. And the ward began to have enough money to meet all its requirements for propaganda and municipal elections.

The membership of this ward now stands at 270, and its work is showing improvement in the Labour vote in successive elections. At the last municipal election, there was an increase of 500 votes, in a ward once looked upon as hopeless for Labour. Its members now say, "It will be a few years, but we shall do it!"

The success in this ward indicates that an intelligent approach to individual membership pays dividends, and if perseveringly handled, can change the whole life and spirit of a ward formerly regarded as hopeless.

Northern

W. B. LEWCOCK

## Lancashire Ready

WHATEVER doubts there may be as to the date of the next General Election, there is no doubt about the dates of the County Council triennial elections which, in the north-west, call for a campaign virtually as great as that of a Parliamentary Election. There are three county councils in the region, Lancashire, Cheshire and Westmorland, and in addition we are interested in the Derbyshire County Council election, as the High Peak area is in the north-west region.

The nature of the task in the two major counties can be assessed from the size of the councils:

|             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| Lancashire: | Aldermen—40,     |
|             | Councillors—121. |
| Cheshire:   | Aldermen—23,     |
|             | Councillors—69.  |

For the first time in the long struggle, Labour won a majority in Lancashire in 1952, and on April 4th next year we shall be defending 65 seats and, it is hoped, attacking the great majority, if not all, of the remaining 56.

In Cheshire (probably on Saturday, April 2nd) we shall be defending 13 seats

and attacking in most of the others.

Already the panels of candidates are in course of preparation by the Regional Council and by its next meeting the Regional Executive Committee will have approved well over 100 names for inclusion. Policy statements are in course of preparation and in most areas we should be ready for action before the end of this year.

If we have no General Election before April, 1955, these elections together with the Borough elections in May can provide a great opportunity for developing and strengthening our election machinery. We are confidently expecting all our Local and Constituency Labour Parties to contest these elections not only to strengthen our position in the council, but also to provide the foundation for success at the General Election.

North Western

R. C. WALLIS

## More Schools

THE Executive Committee of the Welsh Regional Council of Labour does not intend to be caught unprepared whenever a General Election may come. At its July meeting members appreciated that there would not be a great deal of party activity throughout the principality during August and that parties would only just begin to get into their usual swing in September, following the holiday period.

It was, therefore, agreed that arrangements should be made to intensify and co-ordinate Labour Party activities, particularly in the rural and semi-rural constituencies during the autumn. With this in mind, and in view of the successful day schools held last year, it was again decided to offer a day school to each of the 14 rural and semi-rural constituencies.

The Regional Council decided to be responsible for the rent of halls and to make a grant of £2 10s. per school towards the provision of light refreshments. The schools will be for key workers. This will cost the Regional Council something in the region of £60.

It was also decided that two week-end schools be held during the winter for election agents, one in North Wales and one in South Wales, and that each Con-

stituency Labour Party will be asked to pay a registration fee of 10s. for its agent and be responsible for his travelling expenses, and the Regional Council will be responsible for the payment of accommodation, and this may cost the Regional Council another £60.

Experience has taught us that schools of this kind are of immense benefit, and we are looking forward to a successful series of schools.

Welsh

C. PROTHERO

## USEFUL WORK

ONE of the most useful pieces of work in connection with the collating of information in relation to the Postal Vote has been done by Mr. Forbes, a worker for many years for the Brockworth and District Local Labour Party, in the Gloucester constituency.

There are two new housing estates in the Brockworth area comprising about 400 houses, the majority of which are being occupied by workers employed in a new local factory. These new residents are coming into the district from all parts of the country.

Mr. Forbes is visiting every family as the folk move into their new homes, to ensure that they have made application for the Postal Vote in their previous constituencies.

Since November last, he has secured 183 postal votes for Labour supporters. It is worth while noting that prior to being called upon by Mr. Forbes, only two persons had applied for the Postal Vote before leaving their old homes. However, that is not the end of this interesting story.

A record of the persons concerned has been made, and our Regional officers are now writing to the Constituency Labour Parties concerned throughout the country informing them that these former electors are now living in Brockworth and their names should be on the Absent Voter List for a postal vote.